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PROGRAM All Things Considered

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CITY Washington, D.C.

SUBJECT Director Casey/El Salvador

SUSAN STAMBERG: CIA Director William Casey said today that Americans have been brainwashed by the Soviets and their Third World allies about events in Central America and disarmament in Europe. In an address to business executives here in Washington, Casey called on the private sector to help set the record straight.

NPR's Alan Berlow reports.

ALAN BERLOW: Casey pointed specifically to leftist gains in El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras. He said part of the blame for the success of the Soviets and their allies has been the failure of the U.S. to counter Communist propaganda, propaganda the CIA Director said has brainwashed large numbers of Americans.

DIRECTOR WILLIAM CASEY: These tiny little countries in Central America are able to mount a propaganda program, they're able to gather in Havana or Mexico City and lay out a program of propaganda that has a large part of the American public brainwashed into believing that what's happening down there is just innocent peasants seeking their rights; and do the same thing in Europe, where although the wea -- the Soviets have the weapons deployed and they've carried out their military buildup, they manage to put the West in the posture of being a threat to the peace.

BERLOW: Casey's last reference was to Soviet efforts designed to stop deployment of U.S. missiles in Europe. Casey said part of the problem in dealing with Soviet propaganda has been the inability of our government officials to offer an alternative view.